

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The researcher discusses the background of the study, the limitation of the problem, the research questions, and the objectives of the study in this chapter.

1.1 Background

In the process of living, humans have to live alongside one another. Social relationships are necessary for human beings because they are intended to live in communities. Without interaction with one another, no matter how shallow, the brain will not work properly in the long run. There are various stories about castaway, stranded people who survived living alone for years, they are not actually alone but they made non-living objects as their “friends” to accompany them throughout their journey. Some with coconuts, some with rocks, and even wood. That is exactly what would happen if an individual has no relationships, they will invent some themselves. Humans tend to feel safe in a group because their social needs are met.

In order to fulfil the social needs, there is communication. Communication is a complex process by which informational ideas and opinions are conveyed to more people to convey information, generating understanding in the counterpart, and eliciting some type of response on the part of the recipient. Communicators, from their experience, have a rather broad perception of the subject. When information is sent to only one person, this is also called communication. Fonseca (2000) asserts that communicate means to convey something about ourselves, and

regarded as an emotional quality or specific rational of man that arises from the need to “get in touch” with others, or transfer ideas that aims to obtain the meaning based on common preceding experiences. Furthermore, the main element of communication is that the communicated information should be transferred in the right direction and must be understood properly.

In the era of modernity, communicating became much easier because people could effortlessly connect and communicate with each other without having to meet their interlocutors directly. Online communication became the most used method of communicating since Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a standard tool in nowadays workplace and is incredibly precise (Loglia, Bowers, 2016). Gadgets became everyone’s best friend due to their advanced technology that always gets upgraded every year, even month, or day. It has applications that let people send chats, texts, and e-mails. The same goes for shopping, named Online shopping where it is possible for consumers to shop at home or everywhere through their computers or phones as long as they are connected to the internet network.

Online shopping has been helping a lot of people, mostly those with physical and mental disabilities that find shopping at stores is a hassle to do. Online sellers set their prices very affordable as well with no shipping fee from platform vouchers which makes customers will happily repeat their orders online rather than thinking of going to the store directly to buy the same products. Online sellers are competing against each other to have the best ratings to collect and keep loyal customers, but in order to do that, sellers should be good at marketing their products, selling a complete collection of products, and adequate customer service with ethical

communication skills. When human beings are communicating, they could come to agreements and disagreements. Such as when one is in need of something and asks it from their interlocutors, they could refuse and get refused as one of the forms of disagreement in the communication process.

In daily conversation, invitations, refusing offers, requests, and suggestions happen on many circumstances. As a result of too many refusals one gives to another, the higher possibility to cause uncomfortable feelings between the two and a good relationship between them can be broken down because refusal is sometimes a vexatious response for some people. In order to prevent some unpleasant conditions, the speakers use a certain strategy that enables them to convey their refusals without letting down one another. Refusal is a part of speech act form. A speech act is an utterance that serves a purpose in communication. In the philosophy of language and linguistics, speech act is something expressed by person that not only conveys information, but also performs an action as well (J. L. Austin, 1975). The implementation of refusal strategy can be found in any place, including a marketplace. The classification of refusal strategies from Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) is categorized under three general types: adjunct, direct, and indirect. A refusal refers to the situation when a speaker directly or indirectly says “no” to a request or invitation. Generally refusals involve explanations or reasons why such refusals are “necessary”. Based on a pragmatic perspective, the negotiation of a refusal may need many attempts at directness or indirectness, politeness, and impoliteness that are acceptable to the situation and may differ depending on the social values of a particular culture (Perriman, 2007, p.1).

Beebe and Takahashi (1987) investigated written refusals by Japanese EFL students in Japan, Japanese ESL students in the United States, native English speakers, and native Japanese speakers, afterwards they applied them to the EFL context. It was found that there was a strong influence of the native language in the EFL context and that it was negative. Transmission of negative speech act behaviors that occur in the higher stages of ESL. The researchers claimed that the upperclassmen were more proficient in speaking English and were able to express complex notions in Japanese such as “being deeply honored” to receive an invitation.

Another refusal study conducted by Tickle (1991) investigated the practical transmission of ESL refusals by Japanese speakers in a business setting. Thirty-one Japanese men with at least five years of business experience (including one year in the United States) were asked to complete a discourse completion task (DCT) or described hypothetical situations as varied by domain or turf (the business person’s versus the customer’s), function (refusal to an invitation versus refusal to a request), and relationship (positive, negative), status (higher or lower). As a result, it is shown that refusals on a customer’s turf were more direct than refusals on the businessperson’s turf. They were also more direct when no prior relationship existed between the interlocutors. When refusing an invitation (i.e.: to go drinking), lower-status interlocutors expressed more regret than the higher-status interlocutors. Negative willingness and/or abilities such as “*I can’t*” and empathy were more likely to emerge when a request (e.g., from co-workers) was refused.

The results of this particular study provided material for cross-cultural programs to train American businesspeople to deal with Japanese clients more effectively.

Markets are one of the places where communication between societies takes place. In online shopping, the customers generally reach out to chat with the sellers first rather than the opposite like in a face-to-face market, asking for the details of the products the seller advertised. Some customers would attempt to negotiate for the cheapest price possible the seller can accept to seal the deal, it is common for some customers to negotiate far lower prices than the sellers' original price. When the customer's offer is so low that the seller believes it cannot make a profit, the customer will keep soliciting lower prices from the seller until they get the cheapest price possible, and the seller will also keep persuading profitable prices to the customer. If they are able to attain a settlement about a fixed price, the deal is sealed and the customer can take the products. On the other hand, if the sellers disagree with the customers' request, the sellers will decline it, aiming for other customers to buy their products at a more reasonable price.

Therefore, with this present study, the researcher is going to investigate the refusal strategies in the realm of online shopping with social media platforms. The researcher would like to know the refusal strategies used by online sellers who advertise their vendible on social media platforms rather than actual online marketplaces. The researcher uses several social media sites to search for sellers who sell hobby and collectibles products. The researcher thinks it is easier for the chat feature in social media sites to be operated, which is direct messages or DMs rather than the chat feature on online marketplace because the sellers mostly reply

to chats with template bots in online marketplace than in social media's direct messages. The interaction between the sellers and the customer is used as the research object for this research. With previous research, "Refusal Strategies Used by Javanese in Communicating: A Pragmatics Study" by Widya, S.S., M.Hum. and Erika Agustiana, SS., M.Hum. (2021), "Refusal Strategies Used by Male and Female Sellers at Pasar Raya Padang" by Rusdi Noor Rosa (2010), "Refusal Strategies In English By Malay University Students" by Hiba Qusay Abdul Sattar, Salasiah Che Lah, Raja Rozina Raja Suleiman (2011), and "Bentuk-Bentuk Penolakan Verbal Dalam Bahasa Indonesia Mahasiswa ASEAN Studies" (Kinds of Verbal Rejections in Bahasa Indonesia used by ASEAN Studies' Students) by Septa Widya Etika Nur Imaya Nabilah (2018), the researcher will have similar research about the strategies of refusals. The differences are going to be the subject of research and the context it is based on. While previous researchers do face-to-face area research to the subject based on cultural backgrounds, the researcher will do online area research to the subject with customer-to-seller context to identify the online sellers' refusal strategies.

Hopefully, this research will bring benefits to English linguistic about refusals in speech acts used in the digital business, especially in social media sites.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

This research focuses to study refusal acts in the realm of online shopping by the sellers. Aims to identify different strategies used by the sellers while refusing the customer's offer based on Beebe, Takashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990)

classification of refusal acts, and analyze the most dominant refusal strategy used by the sellers who sell hobby and collectibles products in the realm of online shopping with social media. There are several social media sites the researcher uses to obtain the data: Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions of this present study are formulated as follows,

1. What kind of refusal strategies are used by the sellers?
2. What is the most dominant refusal strategy used by the sellers?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed to answer the questions from the research questions. The researcher has objects of study which are; to identify different strategies used by the sellers while refusing the customer's offer based on Beebe, Takashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) classification of refusal acts, and analyze the most dominant refusal strategy used by the sellers who sell hobby and collectibles products in the realm of online shopping with social media.